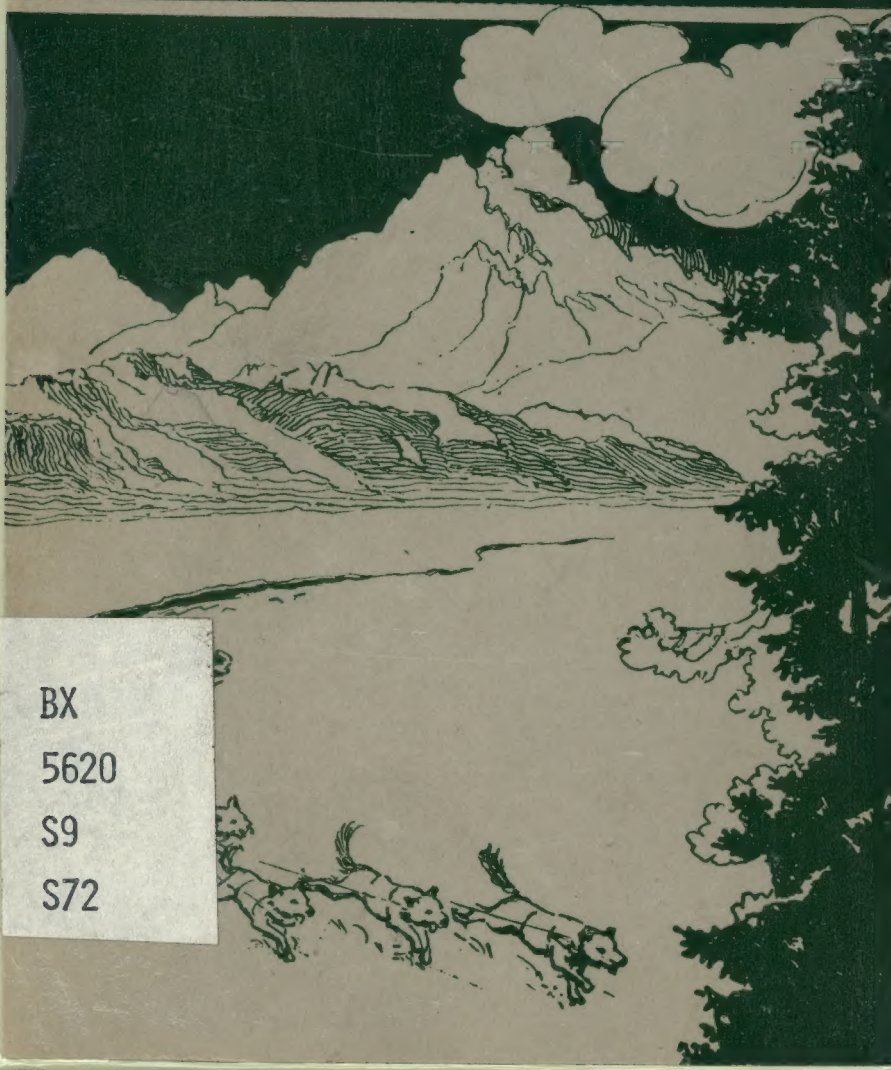


AMBASSADOR OF THE FROZEN WAY

MOST REV. ISAAC O. STRINGER D.D.



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Ambassador of the Frozen Way

MOST REV. ISAAC O. STRINGER, D.D.

Archbishop of Rupert's Land

By

RIGHT REV. A. H. SOVEREIGN

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Ambassador of the Frozen Way

MOST REV. ISAAC O. STRINGER, D.D.

I

“**A**s poor, yet making many rich.” Thus does St. Paul speak of himself in writing to the Christians at Corinth. Likewise he refers to all the apostles. Unconsciously he referred to Isaac O. Stringer, the Apostle to the Eskimos of the Western Arctic. From a lowly home near Kincardine in Western Ontario to the Throne of the Archbishop of Rupert’s Land, from the indescribable squalor and filth of an Eskimo igloo to the banquet table of the King-Emperor of the British Empire—such is the story of a poor boy who made many rich, rich in the spiritual power of the Kingdom of God and its King.

His father and mother came from King’s County, Ireland, in 1846, and settled at Kingarf, about ten miles from Kincardine in Bruce County. The fourth child, Isaac, was born on April 19, 1866. He was born on a farm and worked on a farm. He knew intimately a farmer’s tasks—the care of the cows and the horses, the tilling of the soil, the seeding, the reaping and the harvest, when all was safely gathered in. He helped to build the fences, erect the barns and dig the wells. He received his early education in the one-roomed Public School with its many classes, and his secondary

education was obtained in the High School at Kincardine. He owed much to his teachers as well as to his father and mother, while his Rector and his Church left their influences on his unfolding life. His father offered him the choice of a quarter section as a farm or an education. He chose the latter, decided on the University of Toronto, and early accepted the sacred ministry as his chosen vocation. Dr. Sheraton was Principal of Wycliffe College and Sir Daniel Wilson the President of Toronto University, and these two great men left their impress on his character and visions. He was greatly thrilled with his college life. He received much; he gave much. He entered into the various activities with zest and enthusiasm. The Literary and Debating Society held a real fascination for him both at Wycliffe and at the University. He was signally honoured in being chosen President of the University Y.M.C.A. This avenue of specialized service brought him into contact with the University authorities and with the student body as a whole. Moreover, he was a student with a definite purpose and with unusual powers of perseverance and concentration. One date stands out in his student life like a mountain peak—January 13, 1892. As Chairman of the Missionary Society it was his duty to introduce the speaker of the evening, Right Rev. William D. Reeve, Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Mackenzie River. In his address, the Bishop pictured the endless Valley of the Mackenzie, its Mission Stations and the dire need of Christian Ambassadors. He appealed for two men, one to go up the Liard River for

work among the Indians, another to serve Christ among the Eskimos of the Lower Mackenzie. Gradually but surely, Isaac heard the voice calling to himself and within himself. At last he answered, "Here am I, send me." All preparations were carefully made. He visited hospitals and dispensaries. He learned the art of pulling teeth and even had lessons in cobbling. He received his degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto and was duly graduated from Wycliffe College. On May 15, 1892, at the Church of the Redeemer in Toronto, he was ordained as a Deacon of the Church of God by his Bishop, Rt. Rev. W. D. Reeve, D.D. Monday, May 16, marked his departure from Toronto as he set out on the long journey from his home in Ontario down North to his field of labour in Canada's Arctic Land.

On his journey he paused at Winnipeg and Calgary; at Edmonton his outfit was purchased. He had now come to the end of steel; railroads were left behind. On the long journey down North he would follow winding trails and tortuous streams for two thousand miles. Behind him were home and dear ones, school and friends and all the associations of youth. Before him were unknown paths, Indians, Eskimos, a great adventure for Christ and His Church. "And he went out, not knowing whither he went." Deep were his thoughts; bright were his hopes; earnest were his prayers.

The journey of one hundred miles over rough rails from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing required four days. The freight wagons provided a very precarious and jolting means of

transportation, and frequently the passengers preferred to walk. The camps were made in the open and all cooking by a camp-fire.

Athabasca Landing was reached on May 31st. The mode of transportation changed from wagon to boat. Here the freight was collected and transferred from the wagons and carefully stored on the boats and barges. In the party were Bishop Reeve, a Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Rev. Tom Marsh and Rev. I. O. Stringer. The boat journey had begun. Many and varied were the experiences of the travellers. Rain flooded their sleeping quarters. They were held up at the Grand Rapids on the Athabasca River for ten days, during which time the passengers camped out and cooked for themselves. The Cascade Rapids were reached on June 15th and three of the boats were damaged.

They reached Fort McMurray and were joined there by Bishop Young of the Diocese of Athabasca and a Roman Catholic Bishop. They transferred their baggage to the steamer *Grahame* and began another lap in their journey, which would carry them from Fort McMurray down the Athabaska River to Lake Athabaska, by Fort Chipewyan to Fort Fitzgerald. Crossing the Big Portage with ox-teams, they reached Fort Smith and boarded the steamer *Wrigley*, on which they would travel until they entered the Land of the Midnight Sun. They passed Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson and Fort Norman, and at each place they were greeted by Anglican Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (England)—a Society which had given so much in men and money to bring to these

scattered tribes the story of Jesus and His love. The Church of England in Canada owes a great debt to these stalwart pioneers of the Cross who, from the year 1859, had ventured into these far-flung spaces, and "had hazarded their lives for the Lord Jesus." The wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them and spiritual deserts began to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Our travellers arrived at Peel's River (Fort McPherson) on July 14th and found shelter in the house of that noble apostle, Venerable Archdeacon McDonald. Letters were carefully written, for this would be the last opportunity to send a message to "the outside" for a whole year.

After conferring with Archdeacon McDonald and others, it was decided that he should at once go down further north and visit the Eskimos. Bishop Bompas, the Apostle of the North, had visited the Eskimos in the spring of 1870 but had found them treacherous and cruel. Neither human life nor material possessions were safe in their presence. Murders were frequent through jealousy or from constant quarrels. Baby girls frequently were left to die; aged grandparents were taken for a ride on a toboggan and then rolled into a snowbank to freeze to death.

In a letter to Mrs. Loft in England, Mr. Bompas gave a vivid description of these Eskimos:

"It would be easy for you to realize," he wrote, "and even experience the whole thing if so minded. First go and sleep a night in the first gipsy camp you can find along some roadside, and that is precisely like life with the Indians. From thence go to the nearest

well-to-do farmer, and spend a night in his pigsty (with the pigs of course), and this is exactly life with the Eskimos. As this comprises the whole thing in a nutshell, I think I need give you no further description. The difficulty you would have in crawling or wriggling into the sty through a hole only large enough for a pig was exactly my case with the Eskimo houses. As to the habits of your companions, the advantage would be probably on the side of the pigs, and the safety of the position decidedly so. As you will not believe in the truth of this little simile, how much less would you believe if I gave you all particulars? So I prefer silence to exposing myself to your incredulity."

He was accompanied by companions and canoe boys, and at last, on Thursday, August 4, 1892, they reached the Eskimo village. He was received quite cordially by the natives and they shook hands with him in kindly welcome. Some of the Husky boys presented him with seven fish. They had been out in their annual white whale hunt and several of the whales were on the beach and were being cut up according to their custom. By the tent on the shore, Mr. Stringer had prepared two kettles of tea, and here about twenty of them gathered to receive his bounty. Then he told them of the more precious gift he had come to bring them, the Gospel of the Saviour of mankind. They seemed pleased, and one said that if this were true, they would promise to come again on the morrow and hear more of the "Good News." This was the beginning of the evangelization of the Western Eskimos through this Ambassador of the Cross.

"I told them I had come to teach them the better way of life from the Bible. One Husky exclaimed, 'Tell us all about it. It is good news.' Another old man

exclaimed, 'It is the fault of the white people that we did not know this before. We have seen them a long time and they have never taught us this. I am an old man now. I cannot learn much now, but perhaps there is time for me to learn about it yet.' "

After two weeks Mr. Stringer and his party returned to Fort McPherson. During the winter of 1893, a much larger field was covered in a journey to La Pierre's House westward over the Divide and then northward to Herschel Island, returning in the summer of 1894 to the Mission on Peel River. At Herschel Island he found four whaling vessels which were frozen in for the winter, for they had come to hunt the large black whale. One whale was obtained which produced 2,450 pounds of whale-bone and one hundred barrels of oil. Groups of Eskimos were reached and the story of Jesus and His love was carried to their minds and hearts for the first time. The sun disappeared at Herschel Island on November 26, 1892, and appeared again January 13, 1893.

The first touch with the outside world since the previous summer came on July 14th. The Indians at Fort McPherson came shouting, "Steamboat! Steamboat!" On board were Bishop Reeve, Mr. Camsell, Captain Mills and others, and, not the least important, letters, precious letters from dear ones and friends. On the following day Rev. I. O. Stringer was ordained to the Priesthood by the Bishop, assisted by Archdeacon McDonald. The Bishop preached from the text, 1 Corinthians 15: 58. As the boat was returning immediately, both

night and day were used in writing letters. This was the annual boat; it would not return until the next year.

Each year more frequent journeys were made to the Eskimo villages. Little by little he gradually gained a working knowledge of their language. Hymns were translated and they learned to sing. At a Farewell Service in August, 1893, seventy natives were present and four hymns were sung in their own language. Takochikina, the old Chief, pleaded with him to remain, and all seemed genuinely sorrowful at his departure. They learned to know him, to respect him, to love him, to listen to the Gospel of the Eternal Christ. The seed was falling into good ground.

When our Lord chose His messengers, He sent them forth "two by two." There was a sweet reasonableness in the plan. There was great rejoicing therefore at Fort McPherson in July, 1895, when Rev. C. E. Whittaker arrived as a fellow apostle in the work of evangelization. He was accompanied by Bishop Reeve and together they made the journey to Herschel Island. Here the work of teaching was continued and many services were held.

As Bishop Reeve and Rev. C. E. Whittaker returned, Rev. I. O. Stringer journeyed on one of the whale ships, *St. Jeanie*, to San Francisco—a month at sea. What a hearty welcome he received on every hand! However, the most important event on this furlough was his marriage on March 10, 1896, to Miss Sadie Alexander. It was indeed a very happy union. Mrs. Stringer, who had been trained at the Church of

England Deaconess House in Toronto, had experience in nursing and was also a skilful stenographer. Above all, she was a devout Christian, with wide sympathies and a practical outlook on life. She was a synthesis of Mary and Martha in one person. She shared with her husband the hardships of the Arctic climate and the Arctic life, the perils of many journeys, the disappointments and discouragements of pioneer missionary efforts and the joys of a harvest of human souls won for the Master.

In May, 1896, they began their long journey to the Arctic Ocean by way of Edmonton, Athabasca Landing, Fort Smith, Fort McPherson and Herschel Island. Here on this low, flat, shelving island in the Arctic Ocean, this Apostle to the Eskimo and his bride lived and worked and prayed for the salvation of these children of the twilight. They gradually learned the language (and a very difficult language it is) and committed it to writing. Portions of the New Testament, hymns and sections of the Prayer Book were translated into this northern tongue. Bible stories were told and retold. The record of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus became the Good News, the Gospel of the New Life. Herschel Island was also the rendezvous of the whaling ships and many of them remained in the little harbour for the whole winter. At times between two hundred and three hundred sailors made the island their home for the whole winter. Regular church services were held during the long winter nights, for the sun disappears for many weeks in the winter season. At times a school was held for these sailors, for

many were foreigners and they longed to read and write in the English language. Mrs. Stringer even conducted classes in stenography. Thus a real service was rendered to these ships that paused in the Arctic night. But their real and most precious service was to the Eskimos whom they loved and whose souls they coveted for Christ and His Church. Mr. Stringer was a man of many virtues, but one of the outstanding of these was patience, and here it was greatly needed. The progress was slow, so very slow, and the discouragements were endless, but still he faced his task, "heart within and God o'er-head." His co-partner, Rev. C. E. Whittaker, was a true friend and a most valuable helper at all times and in all things. Thus they laboured on and on together. The nursing knowledge of Mrs. Stringer was in constant demand. With utmost tact and loving touch, she healed their bodies and won their trust and confidence as they sought to heal their souls through the power of the Gospel.

Their first house was built of sods but gradually another building was erected and they were much more comfortable. Here in the North their first child, Rowena, was born. Here their first son was born, Herschel, now a medical doctor.

In August, 1901, Mr. and Mrs. Stringer with their two little children left the island, sailing on a whaling boat, *The Norwhal*, westward through Behring Strait to San Francisco. It was a long, weary journey of eighty-one days and many were the hardships faced. The year 1902 gave to both of them a well-earned furlough in

Eastern Canada, but unfortunately, he had developed eye trouble. The brilliant reflection from the snow had gradually produced a type of snow-blindness and this affliction had been aggravated by reading by the dim light of candle and lamp during the long Arctic darkness. Unable to return to Herschel Island, he was therefore asked by his Bishop to accept the Rectorship of Whitehorse, in Yukon. In the month of October, 1903, the family left Toronto for Vancouver and thence by boat for a thousand miles along the British Columbia coast to Skagway, Alaska, and up the White Pass and Yukon R.R. to the terminal at Whitehorse where steel meets keel. Here within sound of the foaming Whitehorse Rapids, here where the river-boats with their barges turn northward for Dawson City and the Klondike creeks, he began his work for Christ in the little old log church, built through the pioneer labours of Rev. R. J. Bowen. For a time Robert Service, the poet of the gold rush, served as Vestry Clerk for this church.

For two years at this northern post Mr. Stringer served faithfully and conscientiously. Bishop Bompas, the Apostle of the North, now realized that his active labours were over and resigned, and his mantle passed to the Whitehorse Rector, his trusted friend and loyal colleague. On November 15, 1905, the Bishops and the Electoral Committee of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, meeting in Winnipeg, chose Rev. I. O. Stringer to be the second Bishop of Selkirk (Yukon). He was consecrated Bishop in the Church of God by the Most Rev. S. P.

Matheson, D.D., Lord Archbishop of Rupert's Land and Metropolitan of Rupert's Land, assisted by their Lordships the Bishop of Qu-Appelle (J. Grisdale) and the Bishop of Keewatin (J. Lofthouse) on Sunday, December 17, 1905, in the historic Cathedral of St. John's in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Mr. John A. Machray, the Chancellor, read the declaration, and the Bishop of Keewatin preached the sermon from the text, 1 Peter 5: 2, 3. Mrs. Stringer and the two children, Rowena and Herschel, were present.

Bishop and Mrs. Bompas continued to live in the Episcopal Palace at Cariboo Crossing (Carcross), but his strength was waning. On Saturday, June 9, 1906, while Bishop Stringer was with him, he suddenly fell forward. His earthly journeys were over and his labours were ended. In the little Indian cemetery by the headwaters of the mighty Yukon, he was laid to rest. The finger of God had touched him and he slept.

The new Bishop was left alone (yet not alone) with the supervision of a vast Diocese, which not only included the Yukon Territory west of the mountains, but also those areas by the mouth of the Mackenzie River where he had laboured among his beloved Eskimos. The Diocese of Selkirk (name changed to Yukon in 1907) was formed in 1891. Up to that time it had been included first within the Diocese of Athabasca and later as a part of the Diocese of Mackenzie River. On each division, Bishop Bompas had chosen the more northerly areas which were the more remote and the more

difficult. However, it is interesting to note that, in 1861, Rev. William Kirkby had visited the Tukudh Indians at Peel River, and crossed the mountains to La Pierre's House and Fort Youcon (Yukon) and had baptized ninety-eight persons at the two latter places. Rev. Robert McDonald in the year 1862 proceeded to Fort Yukon to minister to the Tukudh Indians. Seven years later Mr. W. C. Bompas had journeyed over the Divide to the Porcupine River and down as far as Fort Yukon. Robert McDonald, later Archdeacon McDonald, was the Apostle to the Tukudh Indians (Loucheux). He gave his life to their evangelization and his talents to the translation of the whole of the Bible as well as the Prayer Book and many hymns into their native tongue.

The work among the Indians and Eskimos and the few white settlers engaged in trapping and prospecting and trading was advancing steadily, and the native races were responding to the appeal of the Gospel, when with a suddenness seldom experienced even in a placer camp came the great stampede, and men from almost every country on earth came pouring into Yukon. They came from all directions, by way of Edmonton and the Mackenzie River and across the Rocky Mountains, by way of the Ashcroft Trail through British Columbia, by way of the Stickine River and Teslin Lake, by way of the White Pass and Chilcoot Trails from Skagway and Dyea, and by way of St. Michael on the Behring Sea. As the camp began to develop and transportation companies opened the way, machinery for thawing the ground, hydraulics,

dredging and everything requisite to a mining camp was brought in. Money flowed freely, fortunes were quickly made and lost; the gambling houses, saloons and dance-halls did a whirlwind business. The discovery of gold quickly changed the aspect of the missionary work. Churches had to be built for white work at the two principal centres, Dawson and Whitehorse. A log church was built in Dawson in 1897 and the present cathedral in 1901 and 1902. In Whitehorse the log church which still stands was erected in 1900.

A residential Indian school for Indian children was originally started in 1891 at Forty Mile, an Indian village down north of the present site of Dawson City. It was moved to Carcross in 1903 by Lake Bennett and under the shadow of the surrounding mountains. When Bishop Stringer accepted the supervision of the Diocese of Yukon Indian Missions were situated as follows St. Andrew's Mission at Fort Selkirk by the mouth of the Pelly River; St. Barnabas Mission at Moosehide near Dawson City; St. John's Mission at Forty Mile; and St. Saviour's Mission at Cariboo Crossing (Carcross). The Church's work among Anglo-Saxons included St. Paul's in Dawson City, St. Luke's at Bonanza, Christ Church at Whitehorse and St. James at Forty Mile.

The first Synod of the Diocese was held in Christ Church, Whitehorse, on September 10-12, 1907. The clerical delegates included Rev. John Hawksley (Carcross), Rev. H. A. Cody (Whitehorse), Rev. A. E. O'Meara (Conrad), and Rev. J. Comyn-Ching (Dawson). The following lay

delegates answered the roll-call: Mr. P. R. Peele (Whitehorse), Major A. E. Snyder, R.C.M.P., (Whitehorse) and Mr. W. D. Young (Conrad). The Bishop's address at this Synod, which was of the most thoughtful and far-sighted character, began with these words:

It is with mixed feelings of gratitude and responsibility that I attempt to address to you a few words on this occasion—gratitude to Almighty God that we are permitted to meet for the first time, officially, for the purpose of consulting together concerning the many problems of our work—responsibility, because I feel how important it is that the foundation now to be laid as an organized diocese should be laid wisely and well, and to the honour and glory of God.

Many matters of organization and policy were considered and plans outlined for the strengthening and extension of the Church's work throughout the Diocese—the raising of a suitable Endowment Fund, the collection of a Thank Offering which was to be presented at the Pan-American Conference in England in the following year and to be devoted to the Bishop Bompas Memorial Fund, the institution of a Diocesan publication, and many other matters of a business and legislative character.

Dawson was chosen as the See City, and thither in the autumn of 1907 Bishop and Mrs. Stringer and their children set sail on the river steamer to find their new home under new surroundings. This was their home until 1931. Here the Bishop and Mrs. Stringer were known and loved; here the children went to school. Though they travelled far during the quarter of a century with its unfolding years, Dawson City was always their home.

It was the natural choice as the See City of the Diocese, for it was the largest town and at the same time was the capital and the administrative centre of the whole of the Yukon Territory.

Indeed, many were their journeys. Over the life of this St. Paul of Canada's Northland was written, "In journeyings often." Following his consecration, he planned that as soon as possible he would visit again his children of the igloo. In 1909, by way of Athabasca Landing and the Mackenzie River, he went down North, accompanied Rev. C. E. Whittaker, to the Arctic coast where nine Eskimos were baptized—the first fruits of much prayer and many labours. On his return westward over the mountains he faced one of the most trying experiences of his career. Crises always reveal the true character of a man. Face to face with death, he manifested so clearly his faith in God, his prayer life, his devotion to duty and his spiritual control over a weakening body. He assayed to journey homeward to Dawson City over the Rocky Mountains. Various unforeseen circumstances arose, causing many days' delay, and the Bishop and his faithful companion, Mr. C. F. Johnson, were overtaken by all the severities of an Arctic winter. Food ran short and such game as was usually to be found had migrated to more sheltered haunts. Starvation stared them in the face. They had existed for days on grape-nuts and stewed squirrel, the latter having been shot with one of the few remaining cartridges. Due to the snow and blizzard, the trail became uncertain and the travellers were daily becoming weaker from lack of food, and were even reduced

to eating their sealskin boots. With valiant determination the Bishop and his friend trudged on, and, on October 20th, with great joy they came upon a marten trap and sledge track, the first indication of humanity seen for over a month. The next day brought the weary travellers to the end of their terrible expedition, undertaken in the true spirit of self-sacrifice and cheerful heroism on behalf of the great cause to which they had dedicated their lives. The following account of the last day of that memorable journey is taken from the Bishop's own diary:

Thursday, October 21st: Breakfast off sealskin boot, soles and tops boiled and toasted. Soles better than uppers. Soup of small scraps of bacon and spoonful of flour (the scrapings of the flour bag), the last we had; tired; hands sore; took a long time to pack up. Tied up Mr. Johnson's fingers. Concluded we were in Peel River. . . . Heard children's voices in the distance and then saw houses on left hand about a mile ahead. We stopped and thanked God for bringing us in sight of human habitation.

The story of this journey reached every part of Canada and the British Isles, and because of it he was frequently referred to as "the Bishop who ate his boots." A simple but touching reference is made in his Bishop's Charge at the Diocesan Synod of 1911 to this all but fatal adventure for Christ:

I am thankful for the privilege of meeting here together with you, my brethren. There was a time since we last met, when for some days I never expected to meet with you again. During that time my thoughts often went out to the little band of workers in this Diocese, and I wrote a message to my fellow workers, to

be given to you if ever found. In the mountain fastness I reconsecrated myself to the Master's service. God has spared our lives to meet again in council.

Through the intervening years much of the Bishop's time and energy was given to the raising of money for the operation of the Diocese as a whole, and also in an appeal for contributions toward the Diocesan Endowment Fund. At one Synod he speaks of "the constant financial worry which at times is almost unendurable." In the fulfilment of this objective, many times he crossed the Atlantic to the British Isles, where he was always welcomed by the English Societies, Parish Churches and Cathedrals and individual friends without number. He was one of the best-known Bishops from overseas. He was not an orator, but he held congregations and audiences by his manifest sincerity, his enthusiasm and devotion, by his ability to give the work a deeply human interest, by happy touches of humour and by his vivid picture of the vital needs of the Indians and the Eskimos who dwelt in one of the uttermost parts of earth. Quotations from English magazines and newspapers tell the story in their own way:

The very simplicity of the Bishop's story makes a strong appeal. He asks for money for three purposes—the opening of new missions and the building of new churches in his great diocese of two hundred thousand square miles, inhabited by white men, British and American, as well as by the natives, for the maintenance of missionaries, for in the whole diocese there are only eight ordained men; and for the three thousand pounds to complete the memorial to the late Bishop Bompas, the heroic missionary bishop whom Dr. Stringer succeeded in 1905.

In the plainest language he tells the needs of his people, British subjects too, and he gives proof of what Christianity has done for the Eskimos, who a comparatively few years ago were drunken, dishonest and immoral. Now the traders and miners and the Hudson's Bay men, who can compare the present with the past, testify to the amazing improvement in their characters. Their religion is a real thing.

This has been proved lately when the Bishop decided to send men to work among the blonde Eskimos a thousand miles east of Herschel Island, discovered by Stefansson.

Two hundred Eskimos came to Fort McPherson to meet the Bishop when he went there to visit them in 1912. There were also two laymen, one of whom he ordained deacon. So keen an interest was felt, however, in these newly discovered Eskimos that it was decided that Mr. Fry, the new deacon, should go to work among them. The Bishop asked for some of the Eskimos to accompany him. He told them plainly the difficulties and dangers; he spoke of the cold and snow, of the mountains and of the poor supplies of food. There was no money to give them, and they might find difficulty in reaching the tribe they sought.

In reply a leading Eskimo spoke, and said, "Tell us which of us you choose to send. We are all willing to go but you must decide."

The Bishop chose five married couples and two men. A schooner bearing the name, in Eskimo, of "Messenger" was dedicated to the work, and four whale boats were supplied by the Eskimos themselves with provisions and outfit for two years.

Very touching, considering the circumstances, was the fact that the people collected about \$350.00 for the Bishop, asking that some of it should be used for work among the heathen Eskimos.

Of Bishop Stringer it might be said that, with St. Paul, he had known "journeyings often . . . in perils of waters; in perils by the heathen; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often, in hunger and thirst; in fastings often."

Mrs. Stringer frequently accompanied the Bishop to England where she, too, was in constant demand as a speaker at various meetings. Here is a recorded interview:

To a woman the question of housekeeping in the Arctic regions was of much interest, as also were clothes, supplies, and letters. We had a comfortable home at Herschel Island, said Mrs. Stringer, for it was the house of the captains of the whaling vessels, thanks to whom we had plenty of coal oil for lighting purposes—a consideration during the two months, from November to January, when the sun never shone. Wood and water were a bother of course. All the fresh water we used was brought from a pond two miles away, but it was not brought in the form of water, for, you know, even the ocean freezes there. Huge blocks of ice were cut in the pond, and hauled across the ice and snow to us. The blocks were melted in the house, lowering the temperature considerably, and the water thus procured was at my hand with the turning of a tap. For wood we used the driftwood which came down the river, and managed very well.

Clothes were not a burden as long as we were on the island, for I had taken a good supply when we went north, and we wore the fur garments of the people, but I did feel shy when I first went back to a more civilized part of the world, for I was wearing the dress in which I had gone away years before.

"With big sleeves," said the Bishop, illustrating with his hand, "and all the sleeves had grown flat and tight while she was away."

Letters reached the Arctic regions only twice a year. Think of that compared with the London Postal deliveries! Empires might be threatened, friends might be smitten with illness and die, personal and national calamity of any kind might occur during those long months of white, cold silence unbroken by news of the world of cities and men.

Supplies arrived once a year. Mrs. Stringer agreed that it was tiresome to write out a list of things wanted,

which would arrive the next year and be used the year after, and one cast a guilty thought to the weekly lists for the stores.

When asked if she did not miss the social life, concerts and other pleasures enjoyed by the average woman, Mrs. Stringer seemed half-surprised. She admitted that she thought little in those days of what she was missing; she was too busy to brood. Between working among the Indians and Eskimos, receiving visits from the people as they travelled about, teaching them and attending to housework, cooking and sewing for the children, there was little time to spare. They both love their people. To outsiders, the clothes, ornaments and customs of the natives seem merely curious. To the missionary and his wife the Eskimos and Indians are friends whom they respected and understood.

"Did you ever see a white woman on Herschel Island?" she was asked. "Occasionally the captain of a whaling vessel (the industry is in the hands of the Americans) brought his wife for a day or so, but for the most part there were no other white women to be seen."

It would be easy to moralize over such contentment and cheeriness, without society, comforts and conveniences, but Mrs. Stringer strikes one as the last person to enjoy being used to point a moral. In fact, this comely, genial woman, with her bright dark eyes and ready smile, hardly realizes that there is anything in those past experiences worth telling in print. She is pleased that her husband's work should be known, as she shares his admiration for the people of the lonely Northland, and respects their loyalty to the ideals of Christianity.

One English reporter thus describes his appearance:

The Bishop of the Snows stood beside the big centre table in the London drawing-room, with the forehead of a Doctor of Divinity, the physique and jaw of a prize-fighter and the mild blue eyes of a child.

Many indeed were the honours which were showered upon these two Ambassadors of Christ.

Bishop Stringer was presented to His Majesty King Edward at a levee at St. James Palace, in 1907, and also at Buckingham Palace in the following year. From a one-roomed mud hut on the bleak shores of Herschel Island set in an Arctic Sea, they were transported to Lambeth Palace in the heart of the Empire, where by royal command they dined with Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary. The King had expressed the wish to meet again "this heroic Bishop" who in 1908 had been presented to him at Marlborough House when he was Prince of Wales. The dinner was held in the noble and historic apartment known as the Palace "Guard Room," which dates from 1424. Guests who were thus honoured included the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne, Lord and Lady Balfour Burleigh, Vice-Admiral Sir Colin Keppel, Lady Desborough and several others. Their Majesties were greatly interested in the Missionary adventures of the Canadian Bishop and his wife. After the dinner, Their Majesties and other guests accepted the invitation of the Primate (Archbishop Davidson) to make an inspection of some of the older portions of the ancient palace.

The First Great War then broke the calm and peace of the English countryside and the whole Empire faced a long and catastrophic conflict. The Bishop offered his services to the Departments at Ottawa, and in 1918 he was chosen to travel overseas to visit throughout the whole of the Canadian Army in England and the Continent, seeking by addresses to the troops to apply the Christian message to the subject of

citizenship, and to prepare the soldiers for their return to their civilian duties in their own Land of the Maple Leaf. His addresses were well received everywhere—in camps, throughout England and Scotland, in France and Belgium and among the Canadian troops of occupation at the bridge-heads of the Rhine in and near Cologne.

Returning to Yukon, the Bishop was called upon to face many problems and varied tasks. The Indian Residential School at Carcross required much thought and careful planning. This school was founded by Bishop Bompas to provide an education and spiritual training for the Indians of the North—the Thlinget Tribes by Teslin Lake, the Wood Indians of Central Yukon and the Tukudh peoples of the farthest North. Originally at Forty Mile north of Dawson, it was moved in 1903 to Carcross as a more suitable location. Seven years later a new and beautiful site, two miles east of Carcross town, was chosen and the Federal Government erected a large and well-planned building which would accommodate about forty Indian children. Near the site is a mountain waterfall, and this gave the name to the school, "Choooutla," the Indian word for "laughing water." To the equipping of this school, the financing of its operation, the providing of a competent staff, the finding of pupils and the following up of the graduates, Bishop Stringer gave much time and care but he was amply rewarded by the Christian character and the new vision of a life of usefulness given to those who passed through its gates. Here the Little Brown Children of the Woods

found a home and friends—and their best friend was the Bishop.

Another problem faced him in the care of the "half-breed" children, boys and girls of mixed parentage, usually of an Anglo-Saxon father and an Indian mother. These families of traders, prospectors and trappers lived usually in lonely and isolated districts of Yukon where no schools could be opened and where no Mission Churches could be placed. To give these children an opportunity of a well-rounded education, the Bishop founded in 1920 "St. Paul's Hostel" at Dawson City, a real home under Christian influences, where the children would live and at the same time attend the Public and High School in the city and worship in the Cathedral Church near-by. The children through these many years have responded enthusiastically to this unique opportunity of unfolding and development in body, mind and soul. Many a Yukon citizen has commended this admirable work, the conduct and deportment of the children, their academic progress and their changed lives. The Bishop himself once remarked, "I have never taken part in any work that has been more satisfactory and promising."

Then his heart and mind turned to the establishment of a similar school for his Eskimo wards over the mountains. This vision, too, was realized in the founding of a school at Shingle Point. In the Bishop's Charge at the Diocesan Synod of 1931, we find the following paragraph:

At the time of our last Synod a petition had been sent in by the Eskimos for the establishment of a school on the Arctic Coast for the education of their children.

Those of us who were interested kept urging the Government to carry out this project and we are thankful to say it is now in operation. It is carried on under the auspices of the Arctic Mission Committee with Rev. H. S. Shepherd as Principal, and there are between thirty and forty children in residence.

Meanwhile many changes were taking place "outside," a word used by Northerners to designate the rest of Canada. One of these was the resignation of that Christian champion and pioneer, the Most Rev. S. P. Matheson, the Metropolitan of Rupert's Land, on January 31, 1931. The Electoral Committee of the Provincial Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land met in Winnipeg, on April 15th of the same year, and on the fourth ballot the Lord Bishop of Yukon was chosen as the Metropolitan of Rupert's Land. The Enthronement was held on September 1, 1931, at St. John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, where twenty-six years before he had been consecrated Bishop of Yukon. The Winnipeg *Tribune* thus describes the scene:

With the impressive rites of the ancient ceremony of the Church of England, the Most Rev. Isaac O. Stringer, D.D., was enthroned Archbishop of Rupert's Land, this morning at St. John's Cathedral.

The officiant was the retiring Archbishop, Most Rev. S. P. Matheson, who for twenty-five years presided over the Archiepiscopal Diocese of Rupert's Land. Upwards of eighty clergy participated in the ceremony, including three Bishops, Rt. Rev. C. DeV. Schofield, Bishop of Columbia, Rt. Rev. A. D. A. Dewdney, Bishop of Keewatin, and Rt. Rev. W. W. H. Thomas, Bishop of Brandon.

The day, though not bright, was warm and the long procession of robed choir and clergy from the south door of the vestry to the main tower entrance of the Cathe-

dral made a pleasing picture for the large crowd of spectators assembled in the historic grounds of the Cathedral. The Church was filled to capacity long before the hour for the ceremony, chairs being placed in every available space.

As the procession passed up the centre aisle, led by the choir, singing the processional hymn, the clergy parted at the foot of the chancel steps to allow the officiant Archbishop Matheson, and Dr. Stringer to pass through. The Archbishop-elect knelt at the faldstool at the foot of the chancel.

The Winnipeg *Free Press* thus comments on the occasion:

Significant as marking a milestone in the administration of the Church of England in Western Canada, the enthronement and induction of the Rt. Rev. Isaac O. Stringer as Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land this morning, bring a new figure into the forefront of the Church in this part of Canada and signalizes the retirement of that veteran Churchman, the Most Rev. S. P. Matheson. The new Archbishop now finds himself the occupant of a post, potent in its influence and extensive in its jurisdiction, an office which Westerners have learned to revere, not so much for the power and dignity with which it is vested but rather for the type of Christian character and statesmanship which its previous occupants revealed. Thus at the outset the new Archbishop is supplied with an exalted precedent and ideal. The requirements of this exacting stewardship, Dr. Stringer can be counted upon to fulfill in a manner which will add new lustre and honour to the office to which he has been called.

Further changes were made necessary in the Ecclesiastical Province by this event. The Rev. Canon A. H. Sovereign of St. Mark's Church, Vancouver, B.C., was chosen as the successor of Archbishop Stringer in Yukon Diocese and early in 1932 went northward to build on foundations which had been so well and truly laid.

Archbishop and Mrs. Stringer reluctantly bade "Farewell" to northern friends and took up their residence in Bishop's Court, the stately home on the banks of the Red River. A sincere and hearty welcome was given to them by one and all in the city of Winnipeg and in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. He had just begun to face the problems of this new and exalted office and to catch a vision of the opportunities of service when an unforeseen and startling cataclysm shook the Diocese and the Ecclesiastical Province. Like a bolt of lightning from a blue and cloudless sky, it was announced that the Church in Western Canada had lost through defalcations three-quarters of a million dollars of its accumulated Trust Funds. The blow was stunning in its suddenness and its far-reaching repercussions. It was not only the terrible loss of large and precious funds, but the loss of confidence in one whom the Archbishop knew and loved and trusted. It was indeed a mortal blow. Isaac Stringer trusted people; he had deep faith in the integrity and loyalty of friends. This confidence was shattered. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Though Canada was passing through the deep valley of the worst financial depression ever before experienced, the Leaders of the Church decided that the funds should be restored at once and an appeal made to the whole Canadian Church. The response was spontaneous and magnificent. The first contribution came from the Indian Tribe at Old Crow beyond the Arctic Circle in Yukon Diocese. Loyal members gave of their

carefully gathered savings. Women gave of their rings and brooches. The rich sent large cheques; the poor gave of their dimes; children gave their pennies. By the grace of God, the lost funds were restored. The Church found itself; a new unity was engendered, its honour restored, the breach in the wall repaired, but a deep scar was left on the physical frame of the Archbishop and he never fully recovered. It was found necessary to vacate the historic home of the Archbishops, Bishop's Court. There were endless journeys, innumerable meetings, many conferences, a multitude of confirmations—the care of all the Churches. The Ecclesiastical Province was not forgotten in his manifold anxieties. In the autumn of 1934 he visited the Diocese of Saskatchewan and penetrated far into northern Indian settlements, which were reached by aeroplane. At Fort Dunvegan by the mighty Peace, one of the oldest forts of the north, he preached to a great open-air gathering on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Diocese of Athabasca and took part in the Synod Sessions. Then he returned to Winnipeg and his own Diocesan tasks.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, October 30, 1934, while about to ascend the steps of Trinity Synod Hall, he collapsed and his noble soul took its flight. The Canadian Church lost one of its great leaders; Christendom lost one of its greatest missionaries. Expressions of sorrow were heard on every side, from all classes and all creeds, and from those who had no creed. Archbishop Owen, our beloved Primate, gave this press report:

The sudden death of the Most Rev. I. O. Stringer comes as a great shock to me and to the whole Church in Canada. He was one of our heroic leaders. For thirty-nine years he laboured in the far North among the Eskimos, the Indians and the scattered groups of white people. All along the great Arctic shore of Canada he was known and loved. For years as Bishop of the Yukon he lived in Dawson City, travelling from thence to the remote parts of his diocese. Among the most cherished memories of my own life are my journeys with him three years ago through the Yukon. I then saw at first hand something of the devotion of all the people for the one they called "Bishop."

He leaves a noble record behind him, a record of selfless, heroic pioneer work for Christ, the Church of England to which he was devoted, and for Canada. A great leader has gone from us.

On Friday, September 2nd, the beloved Archbishop entered his Cathedral for the last time. Here in this church, so full of sacred memories, Isaac O. Stringer was consecrated a Bishop of the Church of God. Here he was enthroned as Archbishop of Rupert's Land. Here a great concourse of sorrowing people gathered on the Friday afternoon to honour the memory of a great Man of God, to thank the Almighty Father for the life and work of one of earth's greatest Missionaries, to pray for dear ones who mourn. Archbishop Matheson read the opening verses of the service; the lesson was read by the Lord Bishop of Calgary (Rt. Rev. L. R. Sherman); the Creed was recited by the Lord Bishop of Qu'Appelle (Rt. Rev. M. M. Harding). The Cathedral Choir and the fifty Clergy present led in the singing of the hymns, "On the resurrection morning," and "Peace, perfect peace." The

Primate of All Canada, the Most Rev. D. T. Owen, gave the address in which he said:

He was sent out forty-two years ago to glorify the name of Jesus and he remained the same kindly, strong-hearted missionary—unselfish, generous, a good soul. It was the name of Jesus which sustained him; it made him strong. But he had the qualities which drew men to him. Tears of sorrow are shed today at his passing, from the Red to the Rockies, and north to the Arctic fringe, in his native diocese of Huron in Ontario.

From the old Provinces of Ontario and Quebec and the Provinces down by the seas, there have come to me messages of sympathy and tributes of praise. The isolated communities in solitary lands, in the trapper's hut, in the lonely tent, there arises the note of sadness at the death of the "Bishop" their companion, father, friend. To the family who suffer the deepest, I convey the heartfelt sympathy of the Church which he loved so well.

Then by the stately stone walls of his Cathedral and in the calm and quiet shade of Life's Garden, surrounded by representatives of Church and State, they laid their Archbishop to rest.

"And so he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell" of the greatness and simplicity and beauty of so noble a servant of Jesus Christ. His friend, the late Rev. Canon Dyson Hague, paid a fitting tribute in these carefully chosen words:

With faces glowing with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and hearts fired with His love, Mr. Stringer and his daringly heroic wife, came to Herschel Island. There they spent many

years of almost hopeless labour, oft times ravenously hungry, eating half-frozen white whale,—raw of course. From year to year he kept on preaching and living Christ without apparent hope. But at last, at last, after seventeen years, nine of the Eskimo were baptized. And then came the miracle of modern Christianity. The foul and filthy became clean and pure in mind and body. Heathenism vanished. Strong drink was banished. Ignorance and superstition were conquered by the glory and beauty of the Gospel. Men and women were transformed. For many years he was the heroic and beloved Bishop of the Yukon, going anywhere, everywhere, to tiny Churches, rural schoolhouses, to billiard halls or gambling dens, hamlets or Indian tribes, where he could tell of Christ and His love. There was no vestige of anything like episcopal pride in him. He was just a man among men, honored and beloved as a true servant of the Master wherever he went.

And now he has gone. The ever heavier burdens and over-heaped duties brought down even his massive physical frame and strength. But nothing can bereave the Church of his life, his influence and his work. His monument is the transformation of a heathen people. By the magic of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he made the wildness and the solitary places to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. No stately obelisk of granite will mark his departure from that farthest limit of the British Empire in the north. More enduring far than any pyramids of dead stone will be the men and women who have been brought from death unto life, and will live for ever because of what he was and what he preached.

Dear ones who mourn his passing and miss his presence include his wife and companion on his many journeys; Rowena, the only daughter, who is the wife of Rev. Canon Heber Wilkinson, Missionaries in Palampur in India; Dr. Herschel Stringer, Dr. Wilfred Stringer, Alexander who is a barrister in Winnipeg, and Randall, who first was graduated as an electrical engineer but who

later studied theology and is now a missionary in the Diocese of Yukon.

His life and deeds and words will ever stand forth in our Canadian Church as an inspiration to Christian service and a challenge to missionary endeavour. May our young men never be guilty of seeking soft cushions for languid limbs but be ready to go forth in the spirit of Christian adventure to the uttermost parts of the earth for the Christ who gave Himself for them. May the trumpet call from so great a life rouse the careless and the wavering to "hazard" ("gamble" is the word) their lives for the Name of the Lord Jesus.

My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder.

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